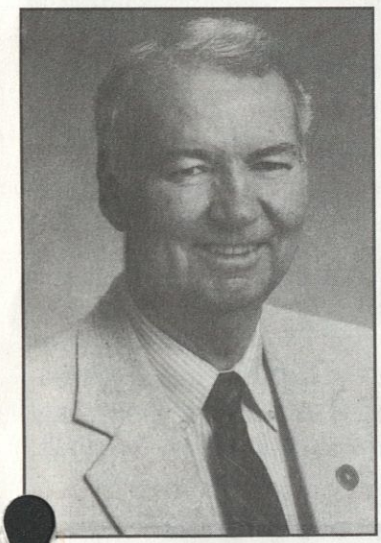
Aftermath

Vol. 12, No. 3 Texas A&M University-Commerce Mathematics Department Newsletter Fall 1998

Dale and Betty Bedgood Endowment Announced



Dr. Dale Bedgood

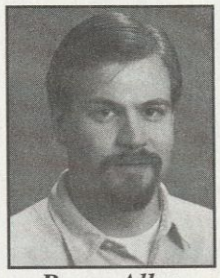
A new Mathematics Department scholarship fund has been endowed in the name of Dale and Betty Bedgood. Dr. Bedgood has been a member of this department since 1967. While he is currently on modified employment, he served as department head from 1967 until 1988 and as a full-time faculty member until 1995. Betty Bedgood has served the department throughout this time by hosting countless social functions and being an unfailing supporter of all departmental activities.

The accomplishments of Dr. Bedgood's tenure here and the good effects of his work are very evident throughout the department. Even though he has not been department head for over ten years, the marks he left in that post are clear and bold. They include an adherence to quality and high standards, of which any university should be proud; a harmonious and kind collection of faculty, of which any administrator should be proud; and a legacy of students in a multitude of professions, of which any teacher should be proud.

Dr. Bedgood was recently named Professor Emeritus, an honorary title which reflects the high regard this institution has for him. This regard is well-placed. As a graduate of Texas A&M Univesity-Commerce (with advanced degrees from the University of Arkansas and Oklahoma State University), he is loyal to it and an excellent example of the good it can accomplish.

We are pleased and proud to announce the creation of this new scholarship. If you should wish to contribute to it, you will find a mailing envelope in this newsletter.

Two Alumni Hired As Ad Interim Instructors

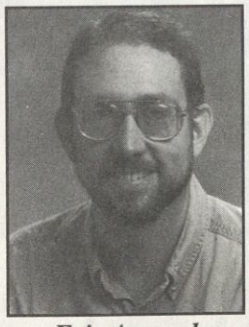


Bryan Allen

The Texas A&M University-Commerce Mathematics Department is pleased to have been able to hire Eric Aurand and Bryan Allen as instructors for the 1998-99 school year. Both are "native sons," having received their master's degrees from this institution when it was under the name East Texas State University.

Bryan Allen returns to the department this year as an ad-interim instructor. He served here in a similar capacity from fall 1990 through the summer of 1993. He then accepted an instructorship in Mathematics and Computer Science at East Texas Baptist University. In 1996 he began two years of doctoral work at Texas Tech University where he was selected as a Gordon Fuller Scholar.

Bryan has quickly re-established some of his old routines here. These include injuring Stuart Anderson on the racquetball court when he fails to let Bryan win.



Eric Aurand

Eric Aurand was born in Tucson, Arizona and received his Bachelor's degree in Mathematics Education from the University of Arizona. He earned a Master's degree in Mathematics from TAMU-Commerce, back when it was ETSU. While attending to his duties as an instructor at TAMU-Commerce, he plans to finish up work in 1999 on a Ph.D. in Mathematics at the University of North Texas in the area of Graph Theory and Combinatorics. Eric is married to Wendi Birkhead, who is also an alumnus of TAMU-Commerce. Jobs that he has held while going to college have included: movie theater projectionist, marine taxidermist, high school teacher, and data analyst. His outside interests include basketball, tennis, and computers.

Alumni News—We Want to Hear From You!

In addition to updating you on the lives of Eric and Bryan, the mathematics department has received the following correspondence:

Shirley Lynn Hill Patrick:
Shirley retired after her final year as a Junior High librarian at Canton I.S.D.

Michael H. Patrick:
Micheal retired in June 1997. They currently reside in Golden, TX.

We would very much like to form a comprehensive data base of information about our alumni. This information is useful beyond simply a natural professorial interest in what/how former students are doing. It can be used for job networking purposes among our graduates, bringing in speakers to discuss what jobs are like in the "real world," and keeping our faculty updated on what kinds of job positions mathematics majors are finding and the mathematics involved in those jobs. All this greatly enhances our faculty's ability to realistically advise students. Hence we ask you to **Please** fill out and send in the alumni information form at the end of this newsletter. Attach a business card if you have one. We also have an electronic version available on our web page. The Texas A&M University-Commerce mathematics department home page is found at http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/coas/math/index. Finally, a personal letter is always wonderful to receive! Dr. Anderson would love to have his e-mail overflow with letters from alumni! His address is: stuart_anderson@tamu-commerce.edu.

Homecoming Alumni Breakfast

Are you planning to come to TAMU-C/ETSU Homecoming 1998? Please join the mathematics department for breakfast and catch up with old classmates and faculty! The twelfth annual Homecoming Mathematics Alumni Breakfast will be held 9:00 a.m., Saturday, October 24, 1998 in the Bluebonnet room of the Sam Rayburn Memorial Student Center. The food and conversation are always great. Several scholarships will be awarded and alumni recognized. Please send your reservations in by October 19, 1998. The cost is $6.50 per person. You should have already received a separate form in the mail. If not, reservations may be made with the departmental secretary, Linda Culver, at (903) 886-5157.

MathDay 1998 and Open House 1998

MathDay 1998 was held May 9, and targeted area high school students interested in math. Ten students (and two parents) participated. Here's how it went: several faculty gave short lectures, on somewhat unusual topics in mathematics; then came the math test (a contest! with prizes including a graphing calculator, a scholarship, and more); then lunch; and finally a panel discussion with recent alumni (Eric Aurand, Joey Cato, and Rachel Driggers). The faculty really enjoyed it, and the students seemed to as well. Hence, we plan to make this an annual event.

Because of the success of MathDay, we've decided to host an Open House in November. This will target area high school teachers. The tentative date is November 14, 1998. Plans include demonstration of *Geometer's Sketchpad* (a tool that's particularly useful for high school geometry teachers); talks on slightly bizarre math topics; information about various Master's degree programs at TAMU-C; and a discussion session, where we ask the teachers to tell us what we can do to help them, both in and out of the classroom.

Alumni can play a role in MathDay or Open House events (by sending your students, or coming yourself as a listener; or perhaps come to give a talk, or serve on a panel, etc). For a flier for any of these events, or more information, contact the math department main office: 886-5157.

Putnam News

On Saturday, December 6, 1997, nine TAMU-C students participated in the 58th annual Putnam exam. This six-hour-long test has only 12 problems, yet getting just one correct placed a student in the upper third of the country. (Almost half of the participants nationally received a score of ZERO.) This was the sixth year in a row that we fielded a team of three, and as usual we had a positive team score. By late

October we should have the 1998 team assembled.

Sample problem from the 1997 test: "A rectangle HOMF has sides HO=11 and OM=5. A triangle ABC has H as the intersection of its altitudes, O the center of its circumscribed circle, M the midpoint of BC, and F the foot of the altitude from A. What is the length of BC?" Nothing more than high school mathematics is required. We recommend you begin by sketching a figure.

Math Club Activities

Wendy Shafer (our MAA Student Chapter President), Jen-Te Tseng, Will Black, Laura Patton, and Ed Bowen, were primarily responsible for an innovative project in the Spring of 1998. To raise funds to donate to established scholarship funds, they designed a form which students could fill out to determine compatible persons on campus for dating purposes according to various aspects. A computer compared student responses and a list of the best matches for each student was printed out and offered for sale to interested students for $1.00. Almost 100 students were curious enough to purchase the results! Thanks to all those who worked hard on this project! Other traditional fund raisers were also successfully carried out. Tseng, Black, Patton, and Bowen are Pi Mu Epsilon President, Pi Mu Epsilon V.P., Alpha Gamma Alpha President, and MAA V.P., respectively. Chad Robinson was treasurer for all three clubs.

We are happy that Wendy, Jen-Te, and Will could attend some sessions of the meeting of the Texas Section of the Mathematical Association of America at SMU in March, and especially pleased that Jen-Te gave a talk at one of the student sessions. His talk was entitled: "Complex Generalization of Second Order Recurrence Relations".

Alumni Information Form (Attach a business card.)

Name: _____ Year of B.S. or M.S. (circle one): _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State & Zip: _____

Home Phone #: _____ Work Phone #: _____

e-mail address: _____

Current Employer: _____

Job Title: _____ Brief Job Description: _____

_____

_____

Other information you would like to share: _____

_____

_____

_____

Texas Section MAA Meeting

The annual meeting of the Texas Section of the MAA was held March 20-28, 1998 at Southern Methodist University and was attended by Stuart Anderson (TX MAA Secretary/Treasurer), Bill Aslan, John Davenport, Deej Heath, John Heath, Charlie Jones, Warren Koepp, Rick Kreminski, Italo Simonelli and Heidi Staebler. Professor Jack Lamb was also present in addition to the following students: Wendy Shafer, Jen-Te Tseng, and Will Black. The following talks were presented by persons from TAMU-C:

Jen-Te Tseng: "Complex Generalization of Second Order Recurrence Relations"

Rick Kreminski: "(I) Estimating n! Quickly (II) Generalized Secant Method"

Heidi Staebler and Warren Koepp: "Issues, Practices, and Resources for the Training of Elementary Teachers (Parts I & II)"

Deej Heath: "Logarithms and Musical Scales"; "Heegard Splittings of 3-Manifolds"

Dr. Heath has since left TAMU-C to take a position at a Math & Science High School Academy in Minnesota.

Jack Lamb: "A Mathematical Structure for the Chinese Zodiac"

Warren Koepp: "On Chinese Astrology and Partitions of Groups"

Italo Simonelli: "On the Probabilistic Approach in Bounding Chromatic Polynomials" "Limiting Distributions of Products of Random Variables"

Colloquia news

For 1997-1998, in addition to the many colloquium speakers who hailed from the TAMU-C Math Department, we enjoyed lectures by the following speakers from out-of-town:

Dr. John Quintanilla, Dr. Joseph Kung, and Dr. Hank Warchall (UNT); Dr. Marvin Eargle (Raytheon Systems); Dr. Jack Mealy (Austin College); Dr. Rich Haberman (SMU); Joe Lohn from Project SEED; and Nicole Fende and Rick Forbes of Deloitte and Touche, Inc. TAMU-C faculty from Accounting and Physics also spoke to our forum. This semester we plan to have speakers from UNT, UTDallas, and Texas A&M (College Station), as well as "local" speakers. The colloquia are at 3 p.m. on Wednesdays, and all are invited to attend. A schedule is posted at http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/coas/math. If you want to come give a lecture, contact Dr. Kreminski at 886-5947 and he'll gladly schedule you in!

Other Talks Given

Rick Kreminski: "An Orthogonality Property of Spheres and Cosets in SO(3)" at the annual joint AMS-MAA meetings in Baltimore in January as well as talks at the University of Dallas, Austin College, Trinity University, TCU and Texas A&M University-Commerce.

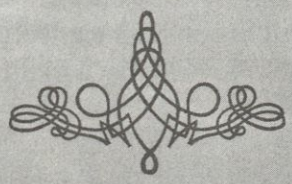
Warren Koepp: "Simple Lie Algebras and Derivations of Laurent Polynomials," at the algebra colloquium at UT-Austin; "Astrological Juggling" (part group theory, part mathematics of juggling) at the Sul Ross University math department; "Representation of Complex Simple Lie Algebras as Derivations of Polynomials," at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

John Heath and Heidi Staebler: "Ways to use Graphing Calculators in Math 175 and 176" at Texas A&M University-Commerce.

Articles Accepted/Published

Rick Kreminski: "Fun Fractions?! You've Got to be Kidding!" in NCTM's *Mathematics Teacher*- accepted; "Estimating Logarithms with College Algebra Students" in the *International Journal of Mathematical Education in Science and Technology*- accepted; "Differentiating Among Infinite Series" in *Mathematics Magazine*, published February 1998.

Bart Goddard: co-authored with R.A. Mollin of the University of Calgary: "Quadratic Prime-Producing Polynomials" in *Journal of Mathematical Sciences* Vol. 9. No. 1 (1998) 1-8, published.



1998 Scholarship Report

The recipients of the 1998-99 Mathematics Department scholarship awards are as follows:

J. Brandon Barrier, Pittsburg, TX
Rachel Lafferty Mathematics Scholarship

Heather Higgins, Naples, TX
Rachel Lafferty Excellence Award

Kelly D. Steed, Alba, TX
W. W. "Bub" Taylor Mathematics Award

William T. Black, Commerce, TX
Cecil B. Wright Mathematics Award

The mathematics department is very grateful to all those who have contributed to the various scholarship funds in order to support and encourage these bright students!

Faculty News Briefs

Dr. Rick Kreminski: The kids are fifteen, eight and two; major preoccupations for them are band, piano, and chaos, respectively. Anne continues to be an adjunct for Math 131, as well as correspondence instructor. We bought a house, which necessitated moving approximately 40 feet (i.e., we moved from one house to the house next door). We also saw how massive amounts of money that we didn't have would disappear anyway, and relied heavily on those handy negative numbers.

Dr. Italo Simonelli: This past Summer my brother and his son visited us from Italy. As far as I know, they were the only tourists walking around Commerce in the middle of July taking pictures of the "hot" spots in town. We were very happy to share our lives with them. My wife Brenda has joined the University community as the Gallery coordinator in the Art department. My daughter Lucia, now in 6th grade, has started playing the clarinet. She hopes to join the band in the future.

Dr. Warren Koepp: Over the past year I have continued to be an active proponent of juggling in Commerce, performing in the Bois d'Arc Bash parade and the holiday parade. Goldie the Clown (aka Kelly Koepp) and I did a clown skit, "Mathematical Paper Cuts," at the Mathematics Night at Commerce Elementary, and I performed a juggling act with partner Terry Humphries at the CES Fall Carnival. Kelly and I also coached a young Odyssey of the Mind (OM) team to a bronze medal finish at the regional meet in Tyler. This was perhaps the most rewarding experience of the past year, and we have continued on to coach tee-ball last spring, and soccer this fall.

On the math front, I continue to be involved with the NExT program at both the state and national levels. I attended (with grant funding from TAMU-C) the University Forum in Austin to learn more about teacher preparation, and am currently working on some research in Lie algebras under another TAMU-C grant. At the UIL Regional Meet in the spring I directed the mathematics contest. Lastly, Problem #10639 in the Problems Section of the American Mathematical Monthly (January 1998) was one of mine.

Charlie Jones: In August I finished my three years as director of the University Honors Program. I am happy to be back to the Math Department full time, but I will miss interacting with Honor Students from other disciplines. (Congratulations to Jen-Te Tseng and his advisor Dr. Bart Goddard. Jen-Te graduated in May with High Honors.) I hope to see other Math students graduate with honors in the near future.

In regard to the Math Skills Center (MSC), we plan to network the computers this semester and upgrade the older machines as well. We now have a university wide sight license for the Maple V software that we are using in precalculus and calculus. I hope this will make it easier for students and faculty alike to develop a facility with this computer algebra system.

Heidi Staebler: I have undertaken three big projects this past year. The first is to develop expertise in training both pre-service and in-service elementary teachers in mathematics. I spent a chunk

of both May and June attending meetings and workshops in that regard and served as an instructor for a third-week "Eisenhower" workshop for 3rd-5th grade teachers this summer focusing on Measurement. The second is participation in a $500,000 National Science Foundation grant awarded to the A&M System titled the Texas Collaborative for Excellence in Teacher Preparation (CEPT). My team is focusing on the preparation of secondary mathematics teachers. Finally, I have undertaken the immense project of refinishing the hard wood floors in my house. As we used to say in Minnesota—Uffda !

For more information about what is going on in the TAMU-C Mathematics Department, please visit our web site at: http://www.tamu-commerce.edu/coas/math !!!

Mathematics Department
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Commerce, Texas 75429-3011

Bulk rate
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 63
Commerce, Texas 75429-3011
Non-Profit Organization